

**CABINET****3 October 2012****Attendance:**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Councillor Wood -     | <i>Leader (Chairman) (P)</i>  |
| Councillor Humby -    | <i>Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning &amp; Economic Development (P)</i> |
| Councillor Coates -   | <i>Portfolio Holder for Housing</i>   |
| Councillor Godfrey -  | <i>Portfolio Holder for Finance &amp; Administration (P)</i>                                    |
| Councillor Huxstep -  | <i>Portfolio Holder for Environment (P)</i>   |
| Councillor Stallard - | <i>Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture and Sport (P)</i>                                  |
| Councillor Tait -     | <i>Portfolio Holder for New Homes Delivery (P)</i>  |
| Councillor Weston -   | <i>Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport (P)</i>  |

**Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:**

Councillors Hiscock, Learney and Pines

**Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:**

Councillor Hutchison  
Mrs J Steventon-Baker (TACT)

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**1. MINUTES****RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 September 2012, less exempt items, be approved and adopted.

**2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr P Davies spoke regarding Report CAB2401 and his comments are summarised under the relevant agenda item below.

**3. LEADER AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that the Council had recently agreed terms for the lease of Abbey Mill, Winchester to "River Cottage Canteen and Deli", subject the necessary planning and licensing approvals being obtained. He welcomed the lease as offering opportunities to local food suppliers and for additional employment in Winchester. He congratulated the Head of Estates and his team for securing the lease.

The Chairman also reported on the recent decision of the Secretary of State to approve the appeal by Cala Homes to build 2,000 properties at Barton Farm, north of Winchester. He emphasised that the Council would work with Cala Homes to ensure that the development offered opportunities for new residents, whilst recognising the requirements of existing Winchester residents in terms of improvements to existing infrastructure.

Councillor Humby announced that the High Street refurbishment project, which had involved joint working between the City and County Councils, had been shortlisted for the Solent Design Awards.

4. **MINUTES OF THE CABINET (HOUSING DELIVERY) COMMITTEE HELD 18 SEPTEMBER 2012**

(Report CAB2401 refers)

**HOUSING DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND DESIGN SPECIFICATION**

(Report CAB2393(HD))

**ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND COMMUNICATION PROCESS**

(Report CAB2392(HD) refers)

During the public participation period, Mr P Davies expressed concern about the proposal for affordable rents being set at a level of 80% market rents. In summary, he did not believe this would enable rents to be truly affordable and was not necessary, as the Council could continue to offer rents at a social rent level. He queried whether the Council would change to offering the new fixed term tenancies, as was now permitted by the Government. Finally, he expressed concern that the Strategy could enable Cala Homes at Barton Farm, and other developers to renegotiate s106 agreements on affordable housing provision.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillors Pines and Hiscock addressed Cabinet and their comments are summarised below.

Councillor Pines concurred with the concerns raised by Mr Davies regarding affordable rent levels. He favoured new homes being offered at a social rent and suggested that the financing of schemes could be grouped together and the costs spread over a longer period than the 30 years proposed, to improve viability.

Councillor Hiscock emphasised that the Liberal Democrat Group supported the provision of as many new Council homes as was possible. However, he expressed concern regarding the proposed consultation process, as he considered that the handling of recent proposals in the Abbots Barton area had raised concerns unduly. He requested that the consultation process be amended to include provision for Ward Councillors to be more fully involved during the initial stages and for immediate neighbours to be notified in writing.

Cabinet considered the recommendations relating to CAB2393(HD) and CAB2392(HD) separately and noted the comments made by Mr Davies and both Councillors.

With regard to CAB2393(HD), Councillor Tait thanked those speaking for their contributions and highlighted that the Strategy stated rents levels at *up to 80%* of market rents. The Corporate Director (Operations) advised that the Government did not expect rents to be subsidised other than by the benefit system and the extra revenue generated by higher affordable rent levels would enable more new properties to be provided. The Head of New Homes Delivery explained that the Council would have to seek the agreement of the Homes and Communities Agency if it wished to charge these higher affordable rents. He reiterated anecdotal evidence given at the Committee that prospective tenants appeared willing to pay these higher levels in schemes provided by other registered providers.

The Head of New Homes Delivery also confirmed that the Council did not plan to introduce fixed term tenancies and any change in this policy would require Member approval.

With regard to CAB2392(HD), Councillor Tait highlighted that, to some extent, the Council would learn from previous experiences as the new homes scheme progressed in terms of public consultation. He advised that a consultation event had been arranged for Abbots Barton residents on Thursday 11 October 2012.

During discussion of the proposed Communication and Approval Process set out in Appendix 1 of the Report, one Member suggested that the Portfolio Holder be advised at Stage 1 of the Development Stages. This was agreed.

With regard to the suggestions made by Councillor Hiscock, Cabinet agreed that Ward Councillors should be more fully involved in discussions with the Portfolio Holder and Officers at Development Stage 2. However, regarding notification of nearby residents, the Corporate Director (Operations) outlined the practical difficulties of such consultation prior to any scheme being formally included in the programme. Cabinet agreed that the Council should adopt a flexible approach to suit different schemes that might come forward in the future.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the minutes of the Cabinet (Housing Delivery) Committee be received (as attached as Appendix A to the Minutes).
2. That the recommendations contained therein be agreed as set out below:
  - a) That the Development Strategy and Design Specification be adopted as the framework for delivering the Council homes new build programme, as set out in the Appendices to CAB2393(HD).

b) That the projects to evaluate potential development sites in Abbots Barton and Stanmore areas be added to the three year Housing Development Programme and the Head of New Homes Delivery be authorised to commission the relevant professional and technical services to enable, where appropriate, planning applications to be prepared with the costs of these services being met from the budget of £100,000 approved by Cabinet on 13 June 2012.

c) That the Communication and Approval Process set out in Appendix 1 of CAB2392(HD) be approved, subject to the amendments outlined above, for the basis for the Council's new build programme.

5. **MINUTES OF THE CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE HELD 19 SEPTEMBER 2012**

(Report CAB2402 refers)

**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) REVISED 2012/13 BUDGET**

(Report CAB2386(HSG) refers)

Councillor Stallard declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of this item due to her role as a County Councillor. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, she remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Standards Committee.

At the invitation of Chairman, Councillor Pines addressed Cabinet and, as Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee stated that the Committee would be examining performance under the various Housing Term Maintenance contracts. He stated that TACT had raised a number of concerns regarding the performance. With regard to the suggestion under the Minute on CAB2390(HSG) for an expanded Winchester Credit Union, Councillor Pines requested that the possibility of utilising the Council's Cash Office be examined further.

The Chairman noted the comments regarding further monitoring of the contracts and welcomed the intended review by The Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Godfrey stated that he had given a response to the question regarding the Credit Union and the cash office at the Council meeting on 27 September 2012, when he explained that it was not practical at the current time. He believed that other methods whereby the Council could assist tenants affected by the implications of welfare reform included financial advice and support from officers. He would examine this issue further with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Cabinet (Housing) Committee be received (as attached as Appendix B to the Minutes) and the recommendations contained therein be agreed.

6. **MINUTES OF THE CABINET (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK) COMMITTEE HELD 5 SEPTEMBER 2012**  
(Report CAB2403 refers)

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Cabinet (Local Development Framework) Committee held 5 September be received (as attached as Appendix C to the Report.)

7. **REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES – ST JOHN’S WINCHESTER CHARITY**  
(Report CAB2384(LDF) refers)

Cabinet noted that in addition to the nomination listed in the Report, Councillor Verney had indicated that he wished to continue as the Council’s representative on St John’s Winchester Charity. In addition, a nomination had also been received from Councillor J Berry.

The Corporate Director (Governance) reported that since the Report was issued, St John’s Winchester Charity had advised that the term of office for all nominated trustees had been reduced to three years from the previous four years.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillors Learney and Pines addressed the Cabinet in support of the nominations from Councillor Collin and Councillor J Berry respectively.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Verney be appointed as a representative on the St John’s Winchester Charity for the period until November 2015.

8. **FUTURE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

RESOLVED:

That the list of future items, as set out in the Forward Plan for November 2012, be noted.

9. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

RESOLVED:

1. That in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

2. That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business because it is likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

| <u>Minute Number</u> | <u>Item</u>                            | <u>Description of Exempt Information</u>   |
|----------------------|--|--|
| ##                   | Exempt minutes of the previous meeting | ) Information relating to the<br>) financial or business affairs<br>) of any particular person<br>) (including the authority<br>) holding that information).<br>) (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers) |

10. **EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 September 2012 be approved and adopted.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.10am

Chairman